1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

only insofar as it affects strength or capacity. Regional specialization is completely lacking.

In the absence of any professional occupations—there being no people who wholly devote themselves to such activities as carpentering, tanning, or hunting—only a limited amount of individual specialization may be noted. Some men are regarded as excelling in the manufacture of boats, snowshoes, or in carpentering while certain women are well known for their skill in sewing and cooking. Such professionals are occasionally approached for assistance in carrying out a task like boat building and are paid for their work. In general, however, such services are rarely requested.

A summary of the division of labor is presented in Table 11. It must be pointed out that this tabulation is based on manifest behavior which, in some cases, differs from the ideals of the society. For example, Louis Maza reported that a man's job is to get wood, brush, and water for the camp while the woman lays the brush and does the cooking. Actually few if any men haul water, none gets brush, but some do haul heavy wood.

Table 11 shows that out of thirty-eight representative occupations, eight are normally performed by either sex and at least thirteen additional ones are frequently done by both sexes. Few tasks can be rigidly allocated to either men or women. Although certain occupations ascribed to men are not normally done by women, women can in an emergency fulfill these tasks. Such work includes big game hunting, cutting trees, and even building tent frames. Men too, in an emergency, can tan skin, make babiche, wash or repair clothes, sew moccasins, and fill snowshoes. In general, however, men do not like to perform women's duties.

No occupations are clearly demarcated by age categories, ability rather than age determining when tasks may be performed. Children, particularly girls above the age of six or seven, perform such household duties as getting wood and water, making fire, tending rabbit snares, sewing, and washing clothes. Girls from about eleven years of age assist in such heavier or more complex female activities as tanning skin, making camp, lacing snowshoes, or preparing cordage. Mature girls and women, however, take the executive role in carrying out these activities. Boys from fifteen years commonly engage in male allocated tasks like cutting trees, hewing, woodworking, trapping, and hunting, but if they are below that age little more than occasional assistance in these tasks is expected of them. No activities are taboo to old age. An old person keeps performing his customary duties until the nature of the work exceeds his physical powers. As a matter of fact it is this dwindling ability, rather than accumulated years, which defines old age.[12]

INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS

Related to what has already been said of the relatively slight importance of social organization in Kaska society is the fact that interpersonal relations are primarily restricted within the family during six or seven months of the year. Visits between winter settlements relieve this pattern somewhat, but it is mainly during trading visits to Lower Post that such interpersonal relations involve larger segments of the society. The highest degree of social interaction occurs during the summer, when members of the several tribes make their residence in that town.

[12] See below pp. 198-200.

1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

lected. Before her marriage, Paulette Donnelly is reported to have told her father: "I want to be like boy. I want to rustle, make little money." She didn't want children, feeling they were too much trouble, and inquired for contraceptive information. The spontaneous exclamation of Paulette, "I'm just as good as man!" when she one day killed a porcupine with an ax, is further evidence of the same trend. Another of Old Man's daughters was on her deathbed when she said to her father: "Don't try to save me. I'm no good to you. I can't break trail, I can't hunt, I'm only a girl."[33] In conversation women often speak rather boastfully of their exploits when hunting big game. Several women were reported to have attempted to induce sterility by magical means.[34]

To sum up the pertinent data reflecting the status of women, it can be said that the society enables the feminine sex to develop a considerable degree of independence and that such freedom is welcomed. The behavior of masculine striving is additional evidence of the woman's search for sexual equality. On the other hand, men's attitudes toward women and the marital relationship give women little opportunity to express independence, and force them to take a subsidiary role which is somewhat inferior to that patterned for men.

Old Age[35]

The Kaska define old age primarily by its biological correlates. Physically, as Old Man pointed out, "When people get old they get stiff and cramp everywhere. When they turn around, everything sore." General weakness and debility affect the body. Eyesight and hearing become impaired. As a man ages his hunting ability is one of the first things to decline. Stamina is drained off, "just like electricity." Louis Mara observed that when he was young he would go anywhere for moose. He kept on the move all the time, traveling all hours of the night. But now, at the age of thirty-seven, he is beginning to feel incapable of such exertion. The day after having indulged in too strenuous activity he wakes feeling unrefreshed and unrested. "You open your eye, feel you get up. No. Go back to sleep again. Old do that." Old age is also stated to be a time when very early experiences of an individual often vividly return to memory—"just like reading book."

Ideally old age is regarded as a period of wisdom derived from abundant experience. Old people are sometimes thought to possess strong supernatural power which has enabled them to hold on to life. Such idealization of age, however, is no obstacle to characterizing a clumsy or inept performance by assessing the actor as "like old man." In carrying old clothes, blankets, and other objects from the cabin which was to be occupied by the ethnographer, several girls began to chant: "Metla blanket," "Metla coat," and so on, for each hoary article which they brought out. The reference was to a partially senile old woman of

[33] Masculine striving was rewarded in aboriginal Kaska society at the expense of a woman's sexual satisfaction. A young girl, protected against conception by magical means, was brought up in the clothing and role of a boy, being trained to do a man's work. Her hunting ability was regarded as tied up with virginity, and she was expected to defend herself strongly against seduction. Slightly different patterns for assertive women to adopt men's roles (without, however, denying themselves sexual satisfaction) have been reported from Plains and other American Indian tribes. For a review of the literature see Seward, *Sex and the Social Order* (1946), 119-121.

[34] For details of such techniques see below, pp. 231-232.

[35] The collection of data for this section was considerably influenced by reference in the field to Simmons' *A Prospectus for Field-Research in the Position and Treatment of the Aged in Primitive and Other Societies* (1943).

1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

that name who lay ill in the settlement and to whom they were humorously comparing the discarded belongings. The myths and folktales show no evidence that the aged were ever glorified. On the contrary, they idealized the stamina and ingenuity of youth while reflecting pity and sympathy for the old and helpless.[10] Sixteen year old Carl Leonard said: "I don't want to be old man. I want to be young man as long as I live. Old man, they say, hard time. Nobody carry around your things. That's why old no good. Young man always do something. I don't mind to be old, but not too old. Too old no good. Someplace you want to go, you can't go."

Anxiety is the principal emotional component with which the individual adjusts to growing old. While the aging person is resigned to the inevitability of his increasing debility, he nevertheless reacts to it as a threat for which he realizes there are no social bulwarks. There is no compensation for old age in Kaska society which takes the place of initiative in hunting and trapping. When the individual feels his capacity to endure the effort of these activities being reduced, he realizes, especially if he is a man, that from now on his self-sufficiency and independence will be seriously limited. Since the man is the principal economic provider of the Kaska family, old age is far more anxiety provoking to the male than to the female. The solidarity of women, their warmer interpersonal ties, and a woman's training for a relatively dependent status all assist in providing her with greater emotional security in age than is afforded the man. The latter, trained for the role of independent provider and taught to rely on his powers of endurance, finds it difficult to relax. His insecurity is starker and less relieved.

The manifest adjustments to old age are found first in the reduction of a person's activities. A man will curtail his trapping activities, giving the more remote portions of his territory to sons-in-law or younger brothers. He may continue to hunt with a group or go out alone for a day, but extended hunting trips are abandoned and more of the old man's time comes to be spent idling around the camp or house. Increasing criticism of youth also appears to mark the male's transition to a new segment of the life cycle. A woman too restricts her activities with age, although she has long been used to receiving assistance in household activities from daughters. For a long time she may continue to sew, apportion food, and maintain a firm control of household activities. Between husband and wife signs appear of emotional ties becoming more tightly knit. Each spouse expresses concern with the other's health. The woman worries if her husband leaves the camp and remains away too long. In both sexes there is more illness. Older men indulge in reiterated descriptions of physical symptoms. Such illness further interferes with the performance of customary duties, while the symptoms are sometimes used as rationalizations for curtailed activity. With the onset of menopause, some women also complain of headache, abdominal pains, and general despondency.

As long as an old person avoids senility and retains an interest in his household, family, and friends, he is not treated differently from other adults. With senility, however, helplessness and dependence become more extreme; the individual is left more alone, is not consulted regarding decisions, and may even be neglected.

In Old Man's camp lived a partly senile old woman. Old Metla, who was being cared for

[10] See Teit, *Kaska Tales* (1917).

1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

by her daughter, Lady Suza, and a foster son, Nitla. With Lady Suza most of the time was her youngest son, Donald. From these relatives Metša received a minimum of care and little compassion. Frequently her fire was permitted to go out and rekindled only after her prolonged moaning and shrieking brought attention. Nitla complained several times of being unable to sleep at night or of being awakened by Old Metša's demands for fire. Old Man too complained of being kept awake by the sick woman's moaning. Because of her lice and uncleanliness, all except Metša's daughter were reluctant to come into contact with the old woman, although on the boat journey to Old Man's place illness and debility made it practically impossible for her to climb into the vessel unassisted. On the boat she sat isolated from the other travelers and most of the time crouched in the prow near the dogs. Early in October everyone in camp left on a hunting trip and abandoned the old woman in camp with only the ethnographer's family. According to Nitla, they went on the hunt only after feeling sure that Old Metša's health was improved, and that she was able to do small things for herself. Four or five days' supply of wood was left, but little food other than sugar, oatmeal, and flour. During this period the old woman once more relapsed into serious illness (perhaps because of too liberally helping herself to sugar, for which she had an inordinate fondness) and was unable to keep her fire going. The wood also became exhausted. Among the last people to return from the hunt was Metša's daughter.

Youth shows little sympathy with the debilities and weaknesses of old age. No courtesies are developed toward the old. So long as a camp contains food, however, a helpless old person will not be allowed to starve. The aged are also entitled to rations provided by the Indian Affairs Branch. Unless there are particularly devoted children, however, it is likely that the standard of living of the very old must go below that of the average member of the society.

Sickness[37]

Sickness is apt to strike at any point along the life cycle and its classification following old age is solely a matter of convention. Here we will deal with those aspects of illness which affect the person's interpersonal relations. The Kaska Indian, with rare reprieves, is forced to live in close association with illness, either his own or that of some member of his family. While all illness is not necessarily serious, concern with symptoms occupies a large portion of the adult's attention. Young people, in contrast, often underestimate the seriousness of sickness.

Little concern with the implications of sickness for the future is manifested, even by those men who are most concerned with their symptoms. Yet incapacitation through illness may have serious economic consequence. Illness in the fall, for example, can prevent hunting and frustrate the accumulation of meat for the winter. If serious ill health occurs in the winter it hinders trapping. The following spring, with insufficient fur, a man can do little more than pay off the credit extended to him the previous year before beginning to run up a new and higher debt. Several men were caught in this vicious circle.

The economic burden resulting from a man's sickness must, in greatest part, be borne

[37] Field work in connection with sickness was greatly aided by the use of Ackerknecht's *On the Collecting of Data Concerning Primitive Medicine* (1943). For other information concerning ideas of sickness and medicine in Kaska society see below pp. 245–246.

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Dease River
Tsetona
Upper Liard

to a proposed match. Where such permission was withheld, elopement might follow. The eloping couple then lived alone or, more often, joined another camp. Sometimes angry parents pursued the young people and beat the youth if they caught him. In the normal course of events a young man undertook bride service for a year in the home of his father-in-law. During this period he contrived to have secret sexual relations with his intended spouse. A wealthy father-in-law terminated bride service with a feast, after which the couple were regarded as man and wife. Occasionally fathers arranged engagements between children. Contracted without gift exchange, these agreements were not absolutely binding on the young people and could be abrogated for sufficient cause. Only single men utilised the war party to secure a wife. Residence after marriage was matrilocal.

Sororal polygyny remained limited to wealthy men. Never did a man live with more than two women, plural wives "always got along with each other." The idea of an unrelated woman as co-wife was strongly resented and the presence of such a woman in camp would provoke endless quarreling.[89] Fraternal polyandry existed and is illustrated in a tale reported by Teit, titled "The Deceitful Wife."[90] A woman, married to two brothers, happened to be raped by a war party that prepared to attack her people. The ordeal weakened the woman but the enemy offered her ptarmigan. In return she promised to conceal what had happened. The mother-in-law, however, became suspicious and spoke to her sons. As a result the two husbands sensed danger and proposed to the wife that they all three enjoy a last good meal together. They thereupon killed the woman and fled. An upper Liard River informant reported knowledge of a Dease River Indian who had shared his wife with nine brothers. The ten men alternated in cohabiting with the woman and no trouble ever occurred between them. However, the brothers became extremely jealous when they saw a stranger talk to their wife and reported the incident to the senior husband who warned off the intruder.

Divorce sometimes followed adultery and occasionally a man quit a barren wife. Upon her husband's death a widow became the responsibility of her brother-in-law.

Tselona. People favored marriage between cross cousins. "Its good for them," the informant explained. The levirate and sororate both obtained.

OLD AGE AND DEATH

Upper Liard Kaska. Many Indians did not live to see old age. Others found their declining years filled with waning prestige and dissatisfaction. With menopause cul-

[89] Allard says: "Polygamy existed among them when they were all pagans. One man would take as many wives as conditions would allow. For instance, if he were a good hunter he would take more than one wife. When I visited the Kaska for the first time in 1923, I found no polygamy among them . . . they had never seen a Catholic priest in their country, but being in their native state more moral than the other races of Indians, the influence of their brethern, the Si kan ni, led them easily to abandon polygamy." (Allard, *Notes on the Kaska and Upper Liard Indians* [1928], 23.) We feel inclined to ascribe the loss of polygyny much more to the influence of the white men who invaded the Dease River valley after 1872. Cf. Honigmann, *Culture and Ethos of Kaska Society* (1949), 44–45.

[90] Teit, *Kaska Tales* (1917), 461–462.

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Upper Liard

888 turally recognized as the end of the child-bearing period a woman knew that old age was at hand. The thought saddened her. Sometimes such a woman began to act youthful and sought to attract a young lover or husband. Very old people, when they became unable to walk, were sometimes abandoned alongside the fire with a large pile of wood. This usually happened in autumn. Then when the snow had crusted the people returned to bury the bodies that they found awaiting them. Often, however, the aged, like the blind and lame, were carried or drawn upon a toboggan.

761 The Kaska recognized several interrelated causes of death. People who exerted themselves, killed themselves, or suffered accidents like drowning, died of so-called natural causes. However, it was not improbable that sorcery had made them vulnerable to injuries or depression. Many deaths followed from malevolent magic as well as from the violation of avoidances like an incest rule. Finally, as we will see, the ghosts could take life. Illness, as already stated, represented the temporary alienation of the soul or wind (tajuc) from the body. Death on the other hand represented a permanent rupture between these entities. The wind, described as "just like" the photograph of a person, did not die but continued to exist in an afterworld from which it might return to be reincarnated. In addition death represented the loss of the shadow (mezi). This did not leave the earth but remained around the scene of death or at a burial place. At night the shadow sometimes manifested itself as a ghost (tsune).

775 There were several afterworlds about which informants remained vague. Up in the sky lay the realm reserved for the souls of the good where people spoke a language different from that employed on earth. Here the winds spent the time in play and eating but they did not hunt. To reach the sky the soul followed a trail leading across a clear country where its tears created a great river that presently blocked further progress. Only by restraining its weeping could the soul lower the waters and thus continue the journey until it came to a narrow passage guarded by two great swans. When they saw the deceased they cried out, "Person coming!" "Then God [Tenatiia] [77] takes them in," the informant added.[8] The description of the afterworld reserved for the evil sounds very much as if it had been influenced by Christian teaching. No other explanation accounts as well for the presence of animals that are not indigenous to the Cassiar. In this realm the souls of the wicked suffered constantly. Snakes crawled around the individual; bad animals troubled, fought, and frightened him. "Elephants picked him up on their tusks and sharks with their teeth scraped the skin from his body. In all this torture the soul was never killed [i.e., the torture never terminated?]."

[8] The Tlingit realm of the dead is described as "an entirely happy region, elevated above the plane of this world." On the other hand we read that there were three such regions, one lower than the other. Below the world still another afterworld existed for the drowned. Bad people went to "Raven's home." (Swanton, *Social Condition, Beliefs and Linguistic Relationship of the Tlingit Indians* [1908], 466.) Jones says that the soul or "shadow" quit the body at death to go "if the person dies a natural death and was not a slave . . . to the happy region of the spirits which is thought of as being in some remote part of the earth; if he die in war, then it goes to dwell in the sky; if drowned, then it descends to a region below the plane of the earth, provided the body is recovered, but if not recovered it is captured by Gonah-tā-kā' (Land-otter Man) and taken back into the woods." Jones, *Study of the Tlingits of Alaska* (1914), 234-235.

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Upper Liard
Dease River

A widower also had to remain single for a time. No visits took place to the burial ground. People avoided that area because of their fear of ghosts. 768

Beigaben remained conspicuously absent, objects being neither burned nor buried with a corpse. After the body had been disposed of the deceased's clothing, to which the ghost might be attached sentimentally, together with the dwelling in which death had occurred, were burned. Informants said that the destruction of the house helped to get rid of the illness lurking there. We are not certain in our mind if this statement represents an awareness of contagion, nor if the explanation has been derived from European sources. Certain objects of the deceased like knives, unworn clothing, arrows, snowshoes, and tanning tools were distributed as mementoes by a surviving brother. Close relatives shared in these goods. Food left by the deceased went to the opposite moiety, probably in the death feast.[46] It is by no means clear whether a dead person's name was regularly inherited at a memorial potlatch. Sometimes, at any rate such names did come to be assumed by the oldest surviving, like-sexed sibling (real or classificatory) or by a deceased's brother's son or sister's daughter. These heirs directed the potlatch which, coming about a year after death, terminated the period of mourning.

Dease River Kaska. Old men possessed enhanced supernatural power, their longevity being a result of "good living." Such a belief perhaps compensated them for the disabilities brought about by age. An informant claimed that the aged were never abandoned but provided with walking sticks that helped them keep up with travelers. When incapable of walking the old were carried on the backs of strong, young relatives and drawn on toboggans. Sometimes people delegated a young relative to fish and otherwise care for an oldster until the group returned with some meat. 888 ●

The origin of death is given in a tale recorded by Teit as constituting Bear's revenge for the theft of fire. Had it not been for Bear's interference constant renewal of life would have been the rule.[47] Death denoted the complete separation of wind (tuntaj'uc) and body. The wind continued to exist in one of two afterworlds. The souls of good people went to "heaven" and "God" while the evil found punishment in the company of the devil. The informant volunteered little concerning life after death. Prompting elicited admission of a path leading to a large body of water that had to be crossed in a boat. Crew might have operated the ferry. Only good people enjoyed reincarnation, the wind returning to life in an infant of opposite sex.[48] The appearance of a ghost (tsunetsina) provided a frightening experience. 761 776 775

[46] Among the Fully River people "the dead person's goods, if he has any, is packed up by the head of the family. That . . . of any value are cached, the rest is either thrown into the river or burned after a year or two. The valuable stuff is then divided amongst the relatives of the dead person . . . it would be given to the ravens if the dead person happened to be a wolf or vice versa." (Field, *Unpublished manuscript* [1918], 13.) The Tlingit destroyed food and property with the aim of sending it on to the deceased "who then actually received its spiritual counterpart." Swanton, *Social Conditions, Beliefs and Linguistic Relationship of the Tlingit Indians* (1908), 431; see also 429-430.

[47] Teit, *Kaska Tales* (1917), 443-444.

[48] Among the Tahltan "there is a strong belief in the rebirth of souls. A deceased relative is often born again by a mother, aunt, sister, or other relative. . . . The dead go to three different places: a